

## RTT-ELC Phase 2 Project Abstract

### Wisconsin:

Applicant: Office of the Governor, State of Wisconsin

Lead Agency: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

Contact information:

Eloise Anderson

(608) 267-9685

[eloise.anderson@wisconsin.gov](mailto:eloise.anderson@wisconsin.gov)

Amount Requested: \$22,700,000

Wisconsin's reform agenda, as articulated in its FY 2011 application: (1) improves access to high quality early childhood and development programs by improving and expanding YoungStar; (2) implements an effective cross-sector early childhood professional development system; (3) strengthens family engagement and parent support strategies to improve children's school readiness; (4) revises the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) and expands related training, coaching and mentoring activities; (5) pilots and implements a comprehensive kindergarten entry assessment; (6) accelerates expansion of the state's longitudinal data system to include early childhood data; and (7) develops a public-private partnership to support system building.

Wisconsin's Phase 2 reform agenda will target resources to programs and providers who serve these children, so as to increase access to and improve the quality of programming these children receive and better prepare them for success at school entry. To achieve this goal while accommodating reduced funding, Wisconsin's Phase 2 application addresses fewer selection criteria, with decisions to pursue criteria based on the following priorities:

- Increasing the supply of high quality early learning and development programs, especially for children whose care is subsidized by Wisconsin Shares;
- Helping families with high needs to access these programs;
- Improving data systems to inform policy and practice decisions; and
- Aligning efforts across early learning and development sectors to leverage and maximize resources.

#### *A(3). Developing the infrastructure necessary to implement the State's reform agenda*

Wisconsin's Phase 2 governance and infrastructure for implementing its reform agenda builds on a foundation of collaboration and shared governance across the participating state agencies and at the regional and local levels. Tribal outreach and liaison services will ensure a coordinated approach to improving quality of tribal early learning and development programs statewide, and a public-private partnership will aid in the sustainability of quality improvement activities.

#### *(B)(1)-(5). Strengthening YoungStar - the state Tiered QRIS*

Wisconsin will employ the following strategies to increase the number of high quality early learning and development programs as well as the number of participating children with high needs.

(B)(1) The state will leverage current resources to expand training and onsite technical assistance opportunities, and build its capacity to assist child care programs to better connect families with key inclusion services and supports such as Birth to 3, Early Childhood Special Education and the Regional Centers for Children with Special Health Care Needs.

(B)(2) Phase 2 funding will support a communication campaign that targets high needs families including families using Wisconsin Works (W-2, Wisconsin's TANF program), families involved in the child welfare system and families at risk of being involved in the child welfare system. Wisconsin will focus outreach efforts on expanding the number of collaborative, community-based 4K programs that participate in YoungStar, building on alignment work that has occurred over the past year and continue ongoing outreach to Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

(B)(3) In light of reduced funding, Wisconsin is not allocating funds for the purpose of training more individuals to implement Environment Rating Scales (ERS), as the YoungStar Consortium currently has the capacity to meet training needs.

(B)(4) Given the strong evidence base for education, training, technical assistance, coaching and mentoring, Wisconsin has elected to concentrate resources in these areas in its Phase 2 application, targeting activities to support programs serving the most concentrated numbers of children with high needs.

(B)(5) In Phase 2, Wisconsin remains committed to a full evaluation of YoungStar inclusive of Phase 1 activities. The state proposes using Environment Rating Scale (ERS), including the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) and the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCRS), as additional study outcomes, to validate program quality.

#### *C(1) Effective application of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards*

Phase 2 builds on the existing cross-sector structure formed among State agencies to ensure the state has early learning standards and a system to deliver professional development and training, and targets activities that will increase training capacity and quality to high need populations and/or service areas.

#### *C(4) Enhancing family engagement and support*

Phase 2 proposes to develop family engagement standards for YoungStar programs, building on and aligning with public 4K and 5K family engagement standards and the recently issued Head Start Family Engagement Framework; develop training curricula on practices in support of these standards; and provide training on the family engagement standards. Further, Wisconsin will target a media outreach campaign to high needs communities.

#### *D(1) A great early learning and development workforce*

Given the high number of low rated providers in YoungStar, Wisconsin's efforts in this area intentionally support increased provider access to professional development, educational credentials and degrees that are needed to improve program quality. A cross sector professional development coordinator will lead cross system efforts related to credit alignment, early childhood licensing redesign, and career pathways in coordination with the ECAC's Professional Development subcommittee and the DPI Office of Early Learning. In addition, the regional training delivery structures that include regional coaches and action teams will be strengthened so as to leverage resources across systems.

*(E2) Accelerating the development of an early childhood longitudinal data system*

There is consensus in Wisconsin that, without an Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS), the state has little ability to evaluate its early childhood system building efforts or target resources effectively. Phase 2 funding will support ways to connect data from YoungStar with education and health outcome data, and additional service participation data for the same children at DPI and DHS. It will also support efforts to strengthen and link related data systems at DCF, including YoungStar, Wisconsin Shares (Wisconsin's child care subsidy program), and Child Welfare.

In summary, Wisconsin believes that its Phase 2 application continues to support its original vision of a strong early childhood system built on quality program standards embedded in a TQRIS, comprehensive early learning and development standards, quality family engagement practices and supports, a comprehensive early childhood workforce development framework, and a strong assessment and accountability system.